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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend the national service laws to prioritize national service programs and projects that are directly related to the response to and recovery from the COVID–19 public health emergency, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. PRICE of North Carolina introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the national service laws to prioritize national service programs and projects that are directly related to the response to and recovery from the COVID–19 public health emergency, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Cultivating Oppor-
5 tunity and Recovery from the Pandemic through Service
6 Act” or the “CORPS Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) The United States has a strong history of
4 citizen response to national calls to service in order
5 to help the Nation recover in times of crisis.

6 (2) More than 80 years ago, the Nation rose to
7 the challenge of the Great Depression with the cre-
8 ation of citizen service programs.

9 (3) Millions of participants benefitted from paid
10 employment and opportunities to develop their skills
11 while constructing national parks and public lands
12 infrastructure and producing cultural works still en-
13 joyed today.

14 (4) Founded in 1990, the Corporation for Na-
15 tional and Community Service today coordinates na-
16 tional service by individuals in the United States
17 across every State and territory, partnering with
18 State-level commissions and supporting locally driv-
19 en services in partnership with nongovernmental or-
20 ganizations and State governments.

21 (5) National service programs provide public
22 health, education, employment training, and nutri-
23 tion services for which the Nation has a critical need
24 in the current crisis.

25 (6) The signature programs of the Corporation
26 for National and Community Service, which are the

1 AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps Na-
2 tional Civilian Community Corps, AmeriCorps Vol-
3 unteers in Service to America (referred to in this
4 Act as “VISTA”), and National Senior Service
5 Corps programs, can and should be expanded to
6 meet current needs.

7 (7) The novel coronavirus pandemic has in-
8 fected and killed individuals in every State and terri-
9 tory, causing more than 31,000,000 cases and
10 560,000 deaths so far.

11 (8) In response, States, Tribal governments,
12 and cities across the country have closed down busi-
13 nesses, schools, and public events, leading to dra-
14 matic swings in the economy.

15 (9) Millions of people in the United States have
16 filed for unemployment benefits since the start of
17 the pandemic, with unemployment rates peaking at
18 an unprecedented level.

19 (10) More than 1 in every 10 adults in the
20 United States has applied for unemployment insur-
21 ance since the crisis began.

22 (11) The pandemic and the associated economic
23 consequences have disproportionately impacted peo-
24 ple of color across many States.

1 (12) To recover, the Nation needs meaningful
2 employment opportunities, as well as a significant
3 expansion of the human capital working to address
4 community needs around public health, behavioral
5 health, hunger, education, and conservation.

6 (13) Experience has demonstrated the cen-
7 trality of community participation in pandemic re-
8 sponse, to overcome stigma and structural barriers
9 and meet the full needs of all members of a diverse
10 community.

11 (14) As the Nation works to respond to and re-
12 cover from the current twin challenges of a public
13 health pandemic and an economic crisis, national
14 service presents a unique opportunity for flexible, lo-
15 cally driven responses to meet State and local em-
16 ployment and recovery needs.

17 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

18 The purposes of this Act are—

19 (1) to provide for annual growth in the number
20 of participants, over 3 years, in national service pro-
21 grams that will provide services in response to the
22 pandemic and economic crisis;

23 (2) to ensure that participant allowances cover
24 the reasonable cost of participation and provide par-
25 ticipants with economic and educational opportunity;

1 (3) to stabilize such national service programs
2 during economic crisis, including by supporting ad-
3 aptations to service models in light of the crisis; and
4 (4) to support opportunities for all individuals
5 in the United States to engage in service, including
6 through the recruitment of increasingly diverse and
7 representative participants.

8 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

9 In this Act:

10 (1) NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACT
11 DEFINITIONS.—The terms “approved national serv-
12 ice position”, “Corporation”, “disadvantaged
13 youth”, “national service laws”, “participant”,
14 “service sponsor”, and “State Commission” have the
15 meanings given such terms in section 101 of the Na-
16 tional and Community Service Act of 1990 (42
17 U.S.C. 12511).

18 (2) COVID–19 EMERGENCY RECOVERY PE-
19 RIOD.—The term “COVID–19 emergency recovery
20 period” means the period beginning on the date of
21 enactment of this Act and ending at the end of fiscal
22 year 2024.

23 (3) HIGH-POVERTY AREA.—The term “high-
24 poverty area” means a census tract defined as high-
25 poverty by the Bureau of the Census.

1 **SEC. 5. ECONOMIC EQUITY AND OPPORTUNITY.**

2 (a) LIVING ALLOWANCE.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section
4 105(b) of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of
5 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4955(b)) and section 140 of the
6 National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42
7 U.S.C. 12594), during the COVID–19 emergency re-
8 covery period, the minimum subsistence or living al-
9 lowance for an individual under section 105 of the
10 Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 and section
11 140 of the National and Community Service Act of
12 1990 shall, subject to paragraph (3), be an amount
13 equal to 175 percent of the poverty line (as defined
14 in section 673(2) of the Community Services Block
15 Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902(2))) for a single indi-
16 vidual as expected for each fiscal year.

17 (2) GRANTS FOR LIVING ALLOWANCE IN-
18 CREASES.—Notwithstanding the limits described in
19 subsections (a) and (e) of section 189 of the Na-
20 tional and Community Service Act of 1990 (42
21 U.S.C. 12645c) or any other limitation imposed by
22 the Corporation, during the COVID–19 emergency
23 recovery period, the Corporation shall, for purposes
24 of paragraph (1), award supplemental grant funds
25 to entities operating a program receiving grant
26 funds under the national service laws (referred to in

1 this paragraph as “grantees”), including continuing
2 grantees, to—

3 (A) increase the minimum subsistence or
4 living allowance provided under section 105(b)
5 of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973
6 (42 U.S.C. 4955(b)) or section 140 of the Na-
7 tional and Community Service Act of 1990 (42
8 U.S.C. 12594); and

9 (B) cover additional costs associated with
10 the increase to the minimum subsistence or liv-
11 ing allowance required under paragraph (1).

12 (3) LIMITATION.—

13 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-
14 graph (B), a stipend or allowance under section
15 105 of the Domestic and Volunteer Service Act
16 of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4955) or an allowance
17 under section 140 of the National and Commu-
18 nity Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12594)
19 shall not be increased by this Act unless the
20 funds appropriated for carrying out part A of
21 the Domestic and Volunteer Service Act of
22 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4951 et seq.) or subtitle C of
23 the National and Community Service Act of
24 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12571 et seq.), respectively,
25 are sufficient to maintain, for the fiscal year in-

1 involved, a number of participants to serve under
2 that part A or that subtitle C, respectively, that
3 is at least equal to the number of such partici-
4 pants so serving during the fiscal year pre-
5 ceding such fiscal year involved.

6 (B) ADJUSTMENT FOR INSUFFICIENT AP-
7 PROPRIATIONS.—In the event that sufficient ap-
8 propriations for any fiscal year are not available
9 to increase any stipend or allowance under sec-
10 tion 105 of the Domestic and Volunteer Service
11 Act of 1973 or allowance under section 140 of
12 the National and Community Service Act of
13 1990 to the minimum amount specified under
14 paragraph (1), the Corporation shall increase
15 the stipend or allowance involved to such
16 amount as appropriations for such year permit
17 consistent with subparagraph (A).

18 (b) CONCURRENT COVID–19 EDUCATIONAL
19 AWARD.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Corporation shall award
21 to any individual who successfully completes a term
22 of service resulting in an educational award under
23 section 147 of the National and Community Service
24 Act (42 U.S.C. 12603), with any part of such term
25 of service occurring within the COVID–19 emer-

1 agency recovery period, a concurrent COVID–19 edu-
2 cational award for an amount described under para-
3 graph (2).

4 (2) AMOUNT OF AWARD.—The concurrent
5 COVID–19 educational award awarded under this
6 subsection shall be in an amount which bears the
7 same proportion to the full amount of the education
8 award the individual received under section 147 of
9 such Act as the length of time of the term of service
10 of such individual that occurs within the COVID–19
11 emergency recovery period bears to the total length
12 of time of the term of service of such individual.

13 (c) NATIONAL SENIOR SERVICE CORPS.—Notwith-
14 standing section 201, subsections (d) and (e) of section
15 211, and section 213(a) of the Domestic Volunteer Service
16 Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 5001, 5011, 5013(a)), to address
17 the critical needs of local communities across the United
18 States, during the COVID–19 pandemic emergency recov-
19 ery period—

20 (1) individuals age 45 or older may be enrolled
21 as volunteers to provide services under part A of
22 title II of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of
23 1973 (42 U.S.C. 5001); and

24 (2) for purposes of parts B and C of title II of
25 the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (42

1 U.S.C. 5002, 5003), the terms “low-income person”
2 and “person of low income” mean a person whose
3 income is not more than 400 percent of the poverty
4 line defined in section 673(2) of the Community
5 Services Block Grant (42 U.S.C. 9902(2)) and ad-
6 justed by the Director of the Retired and Senior
7 Volunteer and Foster Grandparent programs in the
8 manner described in such parts.

9 (d) TAX PROVISIONS.—

10 (1) INCOME TAX EXCLUSION FOR LIVING AL-
11 LOWANCE.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—Part III of subchapter
13 B of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of
14 1986 is amended by inserting after section 139I
15 the following new section:

16 **“SEC. 139J. LIVING ALLOWANCE FOR NATIONAL SERVICE**
17 **PARTICIPANTS.**

18 “Gross income does not include the amount of any
19 living allowance provided under section 105(b) of the Do-
20 mestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4955(b))
21 or section 140(a) or 158(b) of the National and Commu-
22 nity Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12594(a),
23 12618(b)).”.

24 (B) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of
25 sections for part III of subchapter B of chapter

1 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is
2 amended by inserting after the item relating to
3 section 139I the following new item:

“Sec. 139J. Living allowance for national service participants.”.

4 (C) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments
5 made by this paragraph shall apply to taxable
6 years beginning after the date of the enactment
7 of this Act.

8 (2) EXCLUSION FROM GROSS INCOME OF NA-
9 TIONAL SERVICE EDUCATIONAL AWARDS.—

10 (A) IN GENERAL.—Section 117 of the In-
11 ternal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to quali-
12 fied scholarships) is amended by adding at the
13 end the following new subsection:

14 “(e) NATIONAL SERVICE EDUCATIONAL AWARDS.—
15 Gross income shall not include any payments from the Na-
16 tional Service Trust established under section 145 of the
17 National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.
18 12601), including the national service educational award
19 described in subtitle D of title I of such Act (42 U.S.C.
20 12601 et seq.).”.

21 (B) EXCLUSION OF DISCHARGE OF STU-
22 DENT LOAN DEBT.—Subsection (f) of section
23 108 of such Code is amended by adding at the
24 end the following new paragraph:

1 “(6) PAYMENTS UNDER NATIONAL SERVICE
2 EDUCATIONAL AWARD PROGRAMS.—In the case of
3 an individual, gross income shall not include any
4 amount received as a national service educational
5 award under subtitle D of title I of the National and
6 Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12601
7 et seq.).”.

8 (C) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments
9 made by this paragraph shall apply to taxable
10 years ending after the date of the enactment of
11 this Act.

12 **SEC. 6. SUPPORTING EXPANSION.**

13 (a) GRANTS AND PILOT PROGRAM.—

14 (1) PRIORITY.—The Corporation, in awarding
15 grants under paragraph (2), and State Commissions,
16 in directly placing individuals in approved national
17 service positions under paragraph (3), shall—

18 (A) give priority to—

19 (i) entities serving communities—

20 (I) disproportionately impacted
21 by COVID–19;

22 (II) using culturally competent
23 and multilingual strategies in the pro-
24 vision of services; and

1 (III) with proposals for activities
2 directly related to recovery from the
3 COVID–19 public health emergency
4 and the attendant economic and social
5 consequences of such public health
6 emergency, such as—

7 (aa) work that furthers the
8 capacity of nonprofit and commu-
9 nity-based organizations to re-
10 spond to the immediate needs of
11 individuals affected by COVID–
12 19;

13 (bb) services that support
14 economic opportunity;

15 (cc) educational activities,
16 including enrichment and adult
17 education and literacy activities;

18 (dd) services to address
19 housing and food insecurity; and

20 (ee) jobs for youth in pre-
21 serving and restoring nature, in-
22 cluding ensuring environmental
23 resiliency; and

24 (ii) community-based organizations lo-
25 cated in rural or high-poverty areas, or

1 community-based organizations that serve
2 Tribal communities, with greater priority
3 for community-based organizations that
4 propose recruiting applicants for positions
5 to serve in the same metropolitan or
6 micropolitan statistical area or county as
7 the area or county in which such appli-
8 cants attended a secondary school or insti-
9 tution of higher education; and

10 (B) take into account the diversity of com-
11 munities and participants served by entities
12 seeking funding under this Act, including racial,
13 ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, or geographic
14 diversity.

15 (2) AUGMENTATION AND EXPANSION
16 GRANTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of
17 law, during the COVID–19 emergency recovery pe-
18 riod, the Corporation may award noncompetitive
19 augmentation grants to meet the compelling needs of
20 grantees or subgrantees and expansion grants under
21 the national service laws, at such time and in such
22 manner and from such funds as the Corporation de-
23 termines appropriate.

24 (3) PILOT PROGRAM.—

25 (A) IN GENERAL.—

1 (i) ESTABLISHMENT.—Notwith-
2 standing section 178(h) of the National
3 and Community Service Act of 1990 (42
4 U.S.C. 12638(h)), during the COVID–19
5 emergency recovery period, the Corporation
6 shall implement a pilot program under sec-
7 tion 121 and 122 of such Act allowing
8 State Commissions to directly place indi-
9 viduals in approved national service posi-
10 tions.

11 (ii) APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROC-
12 ESS.—Notwithstanding any other provision
13 of law, the Corporation may establish the
14 time, place, and manner of the application
15 and review process for the pilot program
16 established under this paragraph.

17 (B) PRIORITIES.—In addition to the prior-
18 ities under paragraph (1), State Commissions
19 participating in the pilot program shall, to the
20 extent practicable, prioritize the placement of
21 individuals in national service programs carried
22 out by entities that have not previously been
23 service sponsors for participants.

24 (C) REPORT.—The Corporation shall pre-
25 pare and submit a report to Congress at the

1 end of the pilot program described in subpara-
2 graph (A), containing recommendations about
3 whether and how to continue such a program of
4 direct placements.

5 (b) FLEXIBILITY DURING THE COVID–19 EMER-
6 GENCY RECOVERY PERIOD.—

7 (1) MATCH WAIVER.—Notwithstanding any
8 other provision of law, an entity (including a State
9 Commission and an entity receiving subgrant funds)
10 that receives assistance from the Corporation for
11 any program under the national service laws, includ-
12 ing under sections 5(a)(2) and 6(a)(2), during the
13 COVID–19 emergency recovery period shall not be
14 subject to any requirements to provide matching
15 funds for any such program, and the Federal share
16 of such assistance for a recipient (including for a
17 State Commission and a subgrant recipient) may be
18 100 percent.

19 (2) VISTA LIMITATION APPLICABILITY.—Not-
20 withstanding subsections (a) and (b) of section 108
21 of the Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973 (42
22 U.S.C. 4958), during the COVID–19 emergency re-
23 covery period, in order to address the needs of un-
24 derserved communities related to the COVID–19
25 pandemic, of funds appropriated for the purposes of

1 part A of title I of such Act (42 U.S.C. 4951 et
2 seq.) under section 501 of such Act (42 U.S.C.
3 5081), not more than 75 percent may be obligated
4 for the direct cost of supporting volunteers in pro-
5 grams and projects (including new programs and
6 projects that begin after the date of enactment of
7 this Act) carried out pursuant to part A of title I
8 of such Act, and such funds may be obligated re-
9 gardless of when grant recipients commenced such
10 programs and projects.

11 (3) SEASONAL PROGRAM.—Notwithstanding
12 sections 152(b)(2) and 154 of the National and
13 Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.
14 12612(b)(2), 12614), during the COVID–19 emer-
15 gency recovery period, members of the National Ci-
16 vilian Community Corps established under subtitle E
17 of title I of such Act (42 U.S.C. 12611 et seq.) may
18 receive training and perform service in a seasonal
19 national service program established under section
20 154 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 12614) with service last-
21 ing for a period of not less than 3 months and not
22 more than 6 months, as specified by the Director ap-
23 pointed pursuant to section 159(c)(1) of such Act
24 (42 U.S.C. 12619(c)(1)).

1 (4) INCREASE IN LIMITATION ON TOTAL GRANT
2 AMOUNT FOR EDUCATIONAL AWARD ONLY PROGRAM
3 DURING COVID–19 EMERGENCY RECOVERY PE-
4 RIOD.—Notwithstanding the limit described in sec-
5 tion 129A(b) of the National and Community Serv-
6 ice Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12581a(b)), during the
7 COVID–19 emergency recovery period, the Corpora-
8 tion may provide operational support under section
9 129A of such Act for a program in an amount that
10 is not more than \$1,600 per individual enrolled and
11 serving in an approved national service position, or
12 not more than \$2,000 per such individual if at least
13 50 percent of the persons enrolled and serving in the
14 program are disadvantaged youth.

15 (5) NO SUMMER LIMITATION.—

16 (A) ENROLLMENT.—Notwithstanding any
17 other provision of part A of title I of the Do-
18 mestic Volunteer Service Act (42 U.S.C. 4951
19 et seq.), during the COVID–19 emergency re-
20 covery period, the Director of the VISTA pro-
21 gram may enroll full-time VISTA associates in
22 a program, during any months of the year,
23 under such terms and conditions as such Direc-
24 tor shall determine to be appropriate. Such in-
25 dividuals shall be assigned to projects that ad-

1 dress the needs of underserved communities im-
2 pacted by the COVID–19 public health emer-
3 gency.

4 (B) REPORTS.—In preparing reports relat-
5 ing to programs under the Domestic Volunteer
6 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 4950 et seq.), the Direc-
7 tor of the VISTA program shall report on par-
8 ticipants, costs, and accomplishments under the
9 program under this subsection separately.

10 (C) LIMITATION.—The limitation on funds
11 appropriated for grants and contracts, as con-
12 tained in section 108 of the Domestic Volunteer
13 Service Act (42 U.S.C. 4958), shall not apply
14 to the program under this subsection.

15 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the enact-
16 ment of this Act, the Chief Executive Officer of the Cor-
17 poration for National and Community Service shall pre-
18 pare and submit a report to the Committee on Health,
19 Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the
20 Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Rep-
21 resentatives containing recommendations on—

22 (1) how to improve grant programs related to
23 the national service laws, including those under sub-
24 title C of the National and Community Service Act

1 of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12571 et seq.), such as any rec-
2 ommended changes to—

3 (A) the requirements of section 121(e)
4 such Act and section 2521.60 of title 45, Code
5 of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the day
6 before the date of enactment of this Act); and

7 (B) the fixed-amount grants awarded
8 under section 129(l) of such Act (42 U.S.C.
9 12581(l)), including improvements to account
10 for start-of-year costs and to ensure robust
11 member benefits and the long-term strength
12 and viability of such program;

13 (2) whether a new unit within the Corporation
14 for National and Community Service should be es-
15 tablished to provide additional assistance or manage
16 the enrollment process to ensure compliance with
17 sections 189D and 199I of such Act (42 U.S.C.
18 12645g; 12655i) for incoming participants in na-
19 tional service programs, particularly new national
20 service programs receiving program assistance for
21 the first time; and

22 (3) actions to maximize flexibility for State
23 Commissions that would strengthen the work of
24 State Commissions and their grantees.

1 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 In addition to any amounts appropriated to carry out
3 activities or programs under the national service laws (in-
4 cluding under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021
5 (Public Law 117–2)), there is authorized to be appro-
6 priated to carry out this Act \$8,000,000,000 for fiscal
7 year 2021, which shall remain available to be expended
8 through fiscal year 2024.